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Hollywood's Agenda, and the Power Behind It

By Mark Weber

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Last September, during my first visit to Iran, an incident occurred that underscores the importance of our meeting here this week.

Perhaps eight of us -- men and women from several different countries who were attending the "New Horizon" conference -- were sitting together for a meal at a large, round table at the top of the Milad Tower, high above central Tehran. As the conversation turned to customs and lifestyles in our different countries, a younger Iranian in his 20s remarked, almost in passing, that Americans are slender and thin. I was surprised by this, and responded by saying that, by all accounts, Americans are the most overweight people in the world. I asked him why he thought Americans are slender and thin. Well, he replied, that's how they look in American movies.

Now, this young man was not stupid or foolish. And what people think about the average weight of Americans is not a critically important matter. But his remark was another reminder of Hollywood's tremendous, global influence, and of how misleading its imagery can be.

During one-on-one talks with Iranians, I've been surprised by how many have a strangely idealized impression of the US and American society that's based on their viewing of American movies and television. This is especially remarkable given that, in the United States at least, we're told that Iranians hate America. Actually, it seems that often the most hostile view of the US and Americans is by people in countries that are supposed "friends" of the US, and that a much more positive view of the United States can sometimes be found in countries that are supposed enemies of America.

If even many Iranians, whom one might suppose would be particularly skeptical of Hollywood imagery and propaganda, can be so readily swayed or misled by it, how much more easily influenced and misled might people be in countries that are under the direct shadow of Washington, New York and Hollywood.

Well, we certainly have our work cut out for us!

Everyone understands that American motion pictures and television, and, more broadly, the US mass media, play an important role in shaping the outlook, values and behavior, of many millions of people around the world, especially, of course, in my homeland, the United States. But even many of those who readily acknowledge this influence seem not to fully comprehend the formidable power behind Hollywood, or the outlook and agenda of those who wield that power.

Last September, during my first visit to Iran, I was a bit surprised that at one session of the “New Horizon” conference, a few of the participants objected to describing Hollywood as “Zionist controlled” or “Zionist dominated.” The discussion became so heated that a special session was scheduled to further debate this issue and, hopefully, to reach a consensus on it. This question is not a peripheral or academic one. An awareness of who holds power in Hollywood is essential for an understanding of the outlook, ideology and agenda of those who wield such great influence.

During a television interview in 1996, actor Marlon Brando spoke bluntly on this subject. He said: “I am very angry with some of the Jews ... They know perfectly well what their responsibilities are ... Hollywood is run by Jews. It’s owned by Jews, and they should have a greater sensitivity about the issue of people who are suffering.” / 1

For making those remarks, Zionist voices in the US quickly and severely denounced the veteran actor. He was sternly rebuked, for example, by the “Anti-Defamation League,” one of the most powerful and influential Jewish-Zionist groups in the US. The ADL called Brando’s remarks a “slur.” In fact, statements, at least by non-Jews, that affirm Zionist or Jewish domination of Hollywood are routinely denounced by the ADL and similar groups as groundless, “anti-Semitic,” and intolerably offensive “hate” speech. / 2

But what’s the reality of the matter? Was Marlon Brando telling the truth? How accurate is it to describe Hollywood -- and, more generally, the US mass media -- as Jewish or Zionist controlled?

One of the most knowledgeable and seasoned observers of Hollywood is Michael Medved, a well-known Jewish author and political commentator who is also a prominent film critic. On this subject, he has written: “It makes no sense at all to try to deny the reality of Jewish power and prominence in popular culture. Any list of the most influential production executives at each of the major movie studios will produce a heavy majority of recognizably Jewish names.” / 3

One person who has carefully studied this subject is Jonathan J. Goldberg, editor of the influential Jewish community weekly *Forward*. In his 1996 book, entitled *Jewish Power*, he wrote: / 4

“In a few key sectors of the media, notably among Hollywood studio executives, Jews are so numerically dominant that calling these businesses Jewish-controlled is little more than a statistical observation ...

“Hollywood at the end of the twentieth century is still an industry with a pronounced ethnic tinge. Virtually all the senior executives at the major studios are Jews. Writers, producers, and to a lesser degree directors are disproportionately Jewish -- one recent study showed the figure as high as 59 percent among top-grossing films.

“The combined weight of so many Jews in one of America’s most lucrative and important industries gives the Jews of Hollywood a great deal of political power.”

Another person who has commented with some authority on this matter is Joel Stein, a Jewish Hollywood producer, and a writer for *Time* magazine and other periodicals. In a column that appeared in December 2008

in the *Los Angeles Times*, he wrote: "As a proud Jew, I want America to know about our accomplishment. Yes, we control Hollywood ... I don't care if Americans think we're running the news media, Hollywood, Wall Street or the government. I just care that we get to keep running them." / 5

Several years ago, Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, told an audience in Boston: "... You know as well as I do that, somehow, the Israeli government is placed on a pedestal [in the US], and to criticize it is to be immediately dubbed anti-Semitic ... People are scared in this country, to say wrong is wrong because the Jewish lobby is powerful -- very powerful." / 6

Bishop Tutu spoke the truth. Although Jews make up only about two or three percent of the US population, they wield immense power and influence — vastly more than any other ethnic or religious group.

As Jewish author and political science professor Benjamin Ginsberg has pointed out: / 7

"Since the 1960s, Jews have come to wield considerable influence in American economic, cultural, intellectual and political life. Jews played a central role in American finance during the 1980s, and they were among the chief beneficiaries of that decade's corporate mergers and reorganizations. Today, though barely two percent of the nation's population is Jewish, close to half its billionaires are Jews. The chief executive officers of the three major television networks and the four largest film studios are Jews, as are the owners of the nation's largest newspaper chain and the most influential single newspaper, *The New York Times* ... The role and influence of Jews in American politics is equally marked ...

"Jews are only three percent of the nation's population and comprise eleven percent of what this study defines as the nation's elite. However, Jews constitute more than 25 percent of the elite journalists and publishers, more than 17 percent of the leaders of important voluntary and public interest organizations, and more than 15 percent of the top ranking civil servants."

Two well-known Jewish writers, Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab, went into this in their 1995 book, *Jews and the New American Scene*. They wrote: / 8

"During the last three decades Jews [in the United States] have made up 50 percent of the top two hundred intellectuals ... 20 percent of professors at the leading universities ... 40 percent of partners in the leading law firms in New York and Washington ... 59 percent of the directors, writers, and producers of the 50 top-grossing motion pictures from 1965 to 1982, and 58 percent of directors, writers, and producers in two or more primetime television series."

This intimidating power is not a new or recent phenomenon. Thirty years ago, the anti-Zionist Jewish American scholar Alfred M. Lilienthal -- whom I knew well, and for whom I once worked -- dealt with this in his detailed study, titled *The Zionist Connection*. He wrote: / 9

"The extent and depth to which organized Jewry reached -- and reaches -- in the U.S. is indeed awesome ... The most effective component of the Jewish connection is probably that of media control ... Jews, toughened by centuries of persecution, have risen to places of prime importance in the business and financial world ... Jewish wealth and acumen wields unprecedented power in the area of finance and investment banking, playing an important role in influencing U.S. policy toward the Middle East ... In the larger metropolitan areas, the Jewish-Zionist connection thoroughly pervades affluent financial, commercial, social, entertainment, and art circles."

In 1972, during a private White House meeting, President Richard Nixon and the Rev. Billy Graham, the nation's best-known Christian evangelist, spoke together frankly about the Jewish grip on the media. Their secretly recorded one-on-one conversation was not made public until 30 years later. During their talk, Graham said: "This stranglehold has got to be broken or the country's going down the drain." The President responded by saying: "You believe that?" Graham replied: "Yes, sir." And Nixon said: "Oh, boy. So do I. I can't ever say that, but I believe it." / 10

Even though President Nixon, supposedly the most powerful man in the world, believed that America was, as he put it, "going down the drain" unless what he regarded as the Jewish "stranglehold" on the US media is broken, he was afraid to speak publicly about this matter. As powerful as he was, President Nixon feared a power greater than his own.

A characteristic feature of unethical or illegitimate power is a pattern of lies and deceit. For more than 70 years one of the main pillars of Jewish Hollywood has been Metro Goldwyn Mayer. The familiar roaring lion trademark of this great motion picture and television production company appears at the beginning of MGM films. Around the roaring lion of the trademark are the words, in Latin, of the MGM motto, "Ars Gratia Artis," which means "Art for the sake of art." This motto is supposed to suggest that, at least for Hollywood and MGM, film and television productions are made, or should be made, only to promote art or culture for its own sake.

In fact, this MGM motto -- this liberal watchword -- is a lie. For MGM, as for all of Hollywood, "art", or, more precisely, motion pictures and television shows, are produced and marketed not for the sake of "art" or "culture," but rather, above all, for the sake of money, for profits -- but also to promote the interests, ideology and goals of those who control and run Hollywood. An important and socially harmful consequence of Hollywood's furious scramble for dollars is the production of motion pictures and television shows aimed at the largest possible markets, and which, therefore, often pander to a base cultural level. That's bad enough. But in addition, Hollywood has a long record of turning out films that are made to further ideological, ethnic or political goals.

A good example is "Exodus," a 1960 epic about the founding of the State of Israel. It's based on a best-selling novel of the same name, written by Leon Uris, an ardent Jewish Zionist. The film's producer and director was the Jewish immigrant, Otto Preminger. With a memorable, soaring musical score, and starring such prominent actors as Paul Newman and Eva Marie Saint, the film was enormously successful.

In the film, and in the book on which it was based, Jews are portrayed as high-minded, sensitive, idealistic, resourceful and courageous. The British are shown as cynical and rather ignorant. And the Palestinian Arabs, insofar as they are depicted at all, are portrayed as treacherous, cruel and murderous. For an entire generation of Americans, including myself as a youth, along with millions in other countries, the "Exodus" film was perhaps the single most important factor in shaping our view of Zionism and the Palestine-Israel conflict.

During the second half of the last century, one of America's most popular entertainers was Steve Allen. He was also a gifted and noted musician, composer and writer. In 1992 -- some twenty years ago -- he said: "Everyone -- left, right and middle -- is perfectly aware that we are in a period of cultural and moral collapse. But some people don't want to concede that the popular media bear part of the responsibility." / 11 Allen was right. Few people, I think, will dispute that Hollywood has played a major role in lowering, even debasing, the cultural level of the United States, and, to a certain extent, of much of the rest of the world.

Michael Medved, the Jewish American author and film critic I mentioned earlier, took a critical look at this issue in a widely-discussed 1992 book titled *Hollywood vs. America*. While Hollywood continues to produce works of technical brilliance, dazzling camera work, stunning special effects, impressive sets, skilled editing, and creative writing, the great problem of America's cultural-entertainment center is what Medved calls a

“sickness of the soul.” Hollywood today, he says, is a “poison factory,” where what he calls a “pattern of honoring ugliness “ has become “pervasive.” “The most influential leaders of the entertainment industry,” Medved goes on, demonstrate what he describes as a “preference for the perverse.” “One of the symptoms of the corruption and collapse of our popular culture,” he wrote, “is the insistence that we examine only the surface of any piece of art or entertainment. The politically correct, properly liberal notion is that we should never dig deeper -- to consider whether a given work is true, or good, or spiritually nourishing -- or to evaluate its impact on society at large.” / 12

Those who defend Hollywood, and the “American way of life,” will sometimes argue that -- however base or perverse some Hollywood productions may be -- they do not represent “official” or institutional Hollywood. A distinction, they say, should be made between the few admittedly deplorable productions -- a small number of “rotten apples” -- on the one hand, and “official” or institutional Hollywood, on the other. However valid this argument may be, there’s also no question but that Hollywood, as an institution, all too often sanctions and promotes a cultural ethos that is debased, degenerate, and inhuman.

There is no more prestigious or universally acknowledged expression of “official” Hollywood than the Academy Awards ceremony, a highly publicized annual event at which the elite of Hollywood honors itself, and gives recognition to what it regards as the outstanding productions and personalities of the preceding year. At the Academy Award ceremony of early 2006, institutional Hollywood bestowed its highest honor for the best original song in a motion picture on a rap song -- if such sound even deserves to be called music -- entitled “It’s Hard Out Here for a Pimp,” about the laments and travails of a man who makes a living on the money brought in by his whores.

Here is a portion of the lyrics of this rap song -- these are the least offensive lines -- which I’ll try to give in English that is more understandable than the original:

“It’s blood sweat and tears when it come down to a lick. I’m tryin’ to get rich ‘fore I leave up out it. I’m tryin’ to have thangs but it’s hard for a pimp. So I’m prayin’ and I’m hopin’ to God I don’t slip, yeah.

“Man, it seems like I’m duckin’ dodgin’ bullets everyday. Niggaz hatin’ on me cause I got, girls on the tray. But I gotta stay paid, gotta stay above water. Couldn’t keep up with my girls, that’s when things got harder

“North Memphis where I’m from, I’m 7th street bound. Where people all the time end up lost and never found. Man, these girls think we prove thangs, leave a big head. They come hopin’ every night, they don’t end up bein’ dead.

“Wait I got a snow bunny, and a black girl too. You pay the right price, and they’ll both do you. That’s the way the game goes, gotta keep it strictly pimpin’. Gotta keep my hustle tight, makin’ change off these women, yeah”

Is this what Hollywood means by “Art for the sake of art”? Is this really an exemplary product of American culture? Is this the music of a healthy society? What does this tell us about Hollywood? And what does it say about America?

In the aftermath of Hollywood’s prestigious honor for “It’s Hard Out Here for a Pimp,” no major political figure or leading newspaper raised a voice of protest or shame. That’s because in today’s America, this rap song is regarded not as outrageous or perverse, but instead is embraced as an acceptable, praiseworthy expression of US culture.

Another example of Hollywood's notion of cultural distinction is a very profitable and widely acclaimed 2009 motion picture entitled "Inglorious Basterds." In this absurdly fanciful production, actor Brad Pitt plays a Jewish US Army lieutenant during World War II who leads a team of eight Jewish American Army men whose mission behind enemy lines is to kill as many Germans as possible, and to kill them in the most cruel, painful and hideous way possible. Each team member, he says with joyful pride, must collect 100 "Nazi" scalps, and he tells them that no prisoners will be taken -- that is, every captured German soldier must be murdered. In one dramatic scene, a US Army sergeant, who calls himself the "Bear Jew," kills a prisoner of war by bashing in his head with a baseball bat.

This vile glorification of a band of vengeful Jewish sadists was honored by institutional Hollywood with multiple awards, including an Academy Award and eight Academy Award nominations. Years of conditioning by Hollywood filmmakers and American educators had primed audiences to approve and even applaud the sadistic violence of these criminals in US military uniform, because the victims are, after all, evil "Nazis" who deserve to be killed in the most hideous and cruel way possible. Over the years, Hollywood and American public officials have worked together to stigmatize Japanese, Germans, Arabs and others as expendable, evil sub-humans who deserve to be eradicated as vermin.

Hollywood and Washington seem always to be on the lookout for new nations and nationalities for targeting as "evil," and therefore worthy of eradication. Not long ago, you'll recall, an American president proclaimed Iran to be an "axis of evil" country, and his successor, the current US president, tells the world that in dealing with Iran, "all options are on the table" -- which is an indirect way of threatening Iran with bombing, invasion, war and even nuclear obliteration.

American motion pictures and television, along with the rest of the US mass media, play an important role in shaping people's basic assumptions about life and the world, in setting social-ethical standards, and in delineating the boundaries of what's politically possible. Together with America's still very formidable financial, economic and military power, Hollywood and its products have real impact on the lives of millions, not only in the US, but around the globe.

Along with the rest of the Jewish-Zionist dominated media, Hollywood sensationalizes and distorts current events, systematically falsifies history, promotes debased "entertainment" and perverse cultural standards, and makes possible the Jewish-Zionist hold on American political life, thereby enabling Israel's wars and decades-long oppression of Palestinians.

Today there is no more important or urgent task than to clearly identify and effectively counter this Jewish-Zionist power.

I want to emphasize here that to deal candidly with this reality is not, as some claim, "anti-Semitism" or "hate." We should not, and we do not, wish harm to anyone because of his or her ancestry, ethnic background, religion or privately held beliefs. At the same time, we should not -- we must not -- let smears or malicious name-calling keep us from affirming the truth, and doing what is right.

We are meeting here this week at a conference that brings together men and women of diverse nationalities, races and cultures, and with a broad range of political and religious views. But regardless of our background, nationality or worldview, and regardless of the particular passion or cause that most moves each of us, we share a sense of responsibility for the future of our own nations, and of the world.

We are engaged in a great, global struggle -- one in which two distinct and irreconcilable sides confront each other -- a world struggle that pits an arrogant and malevolent power that feels ordained to rule over others, on

one side, and all other nations on the other. It is a struggle not merely for justice or the well-being of the peoples of this or that nation or region, but a great historical battle for the soul and future of humanity itself.

End Notes

1. Interview with Larry King, CNN network, April 5, 1996. "Brando Remarks," *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1996, p. F4 (OC). A short time later Brando was obliged to apologize for his remarks.
2. Abraham H. Foxman, *Never Again?: The Threat of the New Anti-Semitism* (Harper San Francisco, 2003), p. 251.
3. M. Medved, "Is Hollywood Too Jewish?," *Moment*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1996), p. 37.
4. Jonathan Jeremy Goldberg, *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment* (Addison-Wesley, 1996), pp. 280, 287-288. See also pp. 39-40, 290-291.
5. J. Stein, "How Jewish Is Hollywood?," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 19, 2008.
(<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-stein19-2008dec19,0,4676183.column>)
6. D. Tutu, "Apartheid in the Holy Land," *The Guardian* (Britain), April 29, 2002.
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/comment/0,10551,706911,00.html>)
7. Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (University of Chicago, 1993), pp. 1, 103.
8. Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *Jews and the New American Scene* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 26-27.
9. A. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1978), pp. 206, 209, 212, 218, 228, 229. See also: M. Weber, "A Straight Look at the Jewish Lobby."
(<http://www.ihr.org/leaflets/jewishlobby.shtml>)
10. "Nixon, Billy Graham Make Derogatory Comments About Jews on Tapes," *Chicago Tribune*, March 1, 2002 (or Feb. 28, 2002)
(http://www.fpp.co.uk/online/02/02/Graham_Nixon.html);
"Billy Graham Apologizes for '72 Remarks," Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 2002. "Graham Regrets Jewish Slur," BBC News, March 2, 2002.
(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1850077.stm>) The conversation apparently took place on Feb. 1, 1972.
11. Michael Medved, *Hollywood vs. America* (Harper Collins, 1992), back cover dust jacket.
12. M. Medved, *Hollywood vs. America* (1992), pp. 11, 25, 26, 21.

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